

California Department of Veterans Affairs

NEWS JOURNAL

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NEWSLETTER

November 2003

From The Desk Of The Secretary:

In a matter of days we'll be putting an X on the calendar marking November 11th as one more day gone by. But this day is more than just a time for shopping specials; it is the day that affords us the opportunity to collectively remember the men and women, who have fought for our nation's ideals and that, my friends, should not be taken lightly.

This Veterans Day make it a point to thank the veterans in your family and circle of friends. Let them know that you are grateful for their sacrifice and humbled by their patriotism. The freedom we and many other nations enjoy today is possible because of the bravery our soldiers demonstrated during conflicts our country has fought over the years; beginning with our fight for independence through the current battles we are presently fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The California Department of Veterans Affairs has been here for veterans since its inception in the 1920's and will continue working for them for many years to come. Currently, more than 1,500 veterans live healthy productive lives in Veterans Homes run by the department. Another 1,200 will be able to make a

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"BE A STAR"

Barstow Morrison Senior Dining Team Wins Awards

*Denise Hall
Barstow Veterans Home*

The Morrison Senior Dining staff received three awards for creating best in class programs for their community and for achievement of their goals and objectives for the 2002/2003 contract year at the Veterans Home in Barstow. The dietary team participated in Morrison's Be-A-Star Incentive Program, which encourages employees to strive for excellence in achieving the goals of food service for seniors.

The Be-A-Star Program is a five-part program in which communities compete with one another in specific operational areas. The Veterans Home in Barstow won two of the five Western Region awards, an honor rarely achieved. The first star award was for excellence in administering and utilizing the Resident Satisfaction Survey to improve satisfaction levels in the community. They also received the award for their development of a creative training and orientation program for the staff. The second star award was for meeting the community's formalized expectations by creating programs to address issues and concerns. The award was also given for the innovative way that the team rolled out the company's Vision and Values of "Can Do Attitude," "Celebrating Diversity," "Winning Through Teamwork," "Sharing Success," and "Passion for Quality."

The dietary team embraced the challenge with focus, purpose and enthusiasm and was awarded with certificates, a cash award to create recognition

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NEWS FROM CHULA VISTA

John Smith

*Public Information Officer
Chula Vista Veterans Home*

As of the writing of this newsletter, the Veterans Home of California-Chula Vista is in a severe smoke and falling ash condition resulting from the well-publicized San Diego County fire emergency.

So far, the fire has destroyed over 1000 homes, burned more than 900 square miles of land, and has resulted in the deaths of 15 people. The closest fire to our facility is in the Otay Lakes community about 6 miles east of the Veterans Home. This is an area that borders the U.S. States Olympic Training Facility here in Chula Vista. Although the fire does not directly threaten this Veterans Home, we have met with both residents and staff to alert them of the current air quality conditions and keep them up to date on the changing wind conditions. Facemasks have been issued to all residents, volunteers, and staff. They have been advised to stay indoors and all off campus activities have been cancelled until the air quality conditions have improved.

Yesterday, (Monday, October 27th) Governor Gray Davis visited the county's most affected areas. In a press conference with both San Diego Mayor Murphy, and Supervisor Greg Cox, (Chairman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and charter member of the Chula Vista Veterans Home Support Foundation) the Governor committed the full support of all California fire fighting resources in the effort to fight these devastating fires.

The staff and residents of the Veterans Home are calm and appear to be well prepared for this type of emergency. While there have been some expressions of concern, there is no panic and our staff remains fully committed to our mission to "Protect and Serve" the elderly/disabled veterans under our care. As our situation is an evolving one, I will have a complete report of how we survived the great San Diego "Firestorm" in next month's newsletter.

The fire condition has postponed the yearly survey and certification visit by the US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). It is their responsibility to visit our Veterans Home to examine the quality of care being given to our resident population. This will be the first time this particular team of investigators inspect our Skilled Nursing Facility. Our staff has been preparing for this survey for many months and is very confident of passing the inspection with flying colors. The USDVA certification provides us the authorization of federal per diem funds in place of medical monies for the medical needs and expenses of our member veterans. The inspection has been postponed until the air quality conditions in San Diego County have improved. The local weather service is predicting a significant improvement by the end of next week.

October in San Diego County means the celebration of "Fleet Week." Every October, San Diego County Fleet Week Foundation honors the contribution of our veterans and active duty military personnel by sponsoring a countywide celebration of their service to our nation. San Diego County is the home of the largest concentration of active duty service personnel and veterans in the United States. The celebration includes events such as the Sea and Air parade in San Diego harbor, the Navy Blue Angels air show on Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, the Golf Tournament on Coronado Island, a Jazz concert on the streets of San Diego's famous Gas lamp district, the Fleet Week Officers Ball at the San Diego Convention Center and the Fleet Week Barbecue and picnic held at the Veterans Home of California-Chula Vista.

This is our third year hosting this very popular community event. On Sunday, October 19th, hundreds of people including elected officials, community leaders, active duty military, Veterans Home staff, residents and their families, enjoyed a

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BE A STAR AWARD

programs for the team, and a plaque for becoming a "Five-Star Team."

During the celebration, they received special recognition for being #1 in the Region for "Winning through Teamwork". This special recognition was the result of their outstanding teamwork and ability to adapt to changes taking place within the facility while, maintaining resident satisfaction and esprit de corps.

Throughout the busy year, the team fine-tuned their clinical nutrition program through the implementation of new systems and procedures, refined the nourishment program and enhanced the calorie/protein enriched diet and menu program. Employee skill levels were increased as evidenced by a higher degree of accuracy in preparation of meal trays, consistent quality of prepared foods and employees requiring less oversight. They demonstrated a higher degree of excellence by receiving no deficiencies during the USDVA survey and only three minor deficiencies during two Department of Health Services surveys.

The department improved its communication and responsiveness through participation in Food Committee meetings, establishing a monthly newsletter entitled "The Tastyville News," printing weekly menus and by having available and monitoring customer comment cards.

In addition to striving for excellence in customer satisfaction and service to Veterans, the dietary team expanded their scope of service to include participation within the Barstow community. They collected toys for the annual Toys For Tots telethon, raised money for the Army Relief Fund (\$250), the Navy Relief Fund (\$250), and participated in the Relay for Life walk sponsored by the Cancer Society in June. The "walk" had a special emphasis because this disease personally touched some of the members of the dietary department. The team, called the Screaming

Antioxidants, was comprised of 19 dietary employees, five friends and family members, four veterans home employees and ten friends from the Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow. Their efforts raised \$3,300 for cancer research. During the 24-hour relay, the team developed a healthier outlook on nutrition.

The California Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Legislation and Public Affairs publishes CDVA News Journal once a month.

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good old-fashioned picnic complete with entertainment and activities for all. The Marine Corps jazz ensemble from the Marine Corp Recruit Training Depot (MCRD) provided the musical entertainment. Our Veterans Home is located in the 50th Congressional District. Bob Filner is in his fourth term representing the district's interests, and was our guest speaker at this year's event. Congressman Filner serves on the U.S. House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Committee and has been a frequent visitor to our Veterans Home. We have a very close working relationship with his office here in Chula Vista. Other speakers at this year's event included: Greg Cox (Chairman of the SD County Board of Supervisors) John Willet (Chula Vista Veteran of the Year) Ms. Glory Vahai (2003 Ms. Semper Fi), Tom Caughlan (Executive Director of the S.D. Fleet Week Foundation) and Nancy Owen (Chairman of the San Diego County Veterans Advisory Council). Nancy is also the Vice-chair of our Chula Vista Veterans Home Support Foundation.

All who attended the event had a great time, and we look forward to next year.

NEWS FROM YOUNTVILLE

Lynn Scott

*Assistant Hospital Administrator
Chula Vista Veterans Home*

New construction projects abound at the 120-year-old Veterans Home of California in Yountville. The Home's Administrator, Marcella McCormack stated, "We are very busy making the Home an even better place for veterans to live. In the last fifty years, the Home has never had so many construction projects going at one time." Included in the current projects are the following:

The Holderman Hospital Recreation Area

This two million dollar remodel project is complete. With a capacity for over 250 people, the large area provides space for special events, recreational and therapeutic programs, meetings, and group dining. With adjustable auditorium dividers, the room can accommodate three separate venues at once. K. Maurice Johannessen, Secretary for the California Department of Veterans Affairs, cut the ribbon and officially opened the area on October 29. Two days later, the area saw the first recreational use, the annual Halloween party.

Reconstruction of Jefferson Hall — "Section L"

This residential hall will be complete in November with residents moving back in shortly thereafter. The improvements include: an elevator for easier second floor access, new heat and A/C with individual room controls, wheelchair accessible bathrooms, larger laundry and kitchen areas and a wider access road to the building. Home resident and retired Air Force Colonel, Dick Hum, said, "This is great news! We are now going to have air-conditioning and more of the amenities of modern living."

Reconstruction of Lincoln Theater

This project was largely funded by a community group called "The Friends of the Lincoln Theater." When completed in the summer of 2004, this fourteen million-dollar project will be the largest theater/auditorium in the Napa Valley. This completely modern theater will feature the following amenities: 1200-seat capacity

with a new balcony; a new greatly expanded, glass-enclosed lobby; a new wing of offices and practice areas; "green rooms" for the entertainers and full audiovisual capabilities. The theater will be linked to the Home's closed-circuit TV station so performances can be broadcast live throughout the Home and to hospitalized residents. Home resident, Rita Umphries, said, "Imagine! Our own Lincoln Theater is going to be the biggest and nicest place for live entertainment in the entire area. We can't wait for it to open. It is going to be state-of-the-art; it will really improve the quality of life for veterans."

Emergency Generator Installation

This project is now completed and ensures that the Home's main dining room maintains electrical power to produce the million-meals-per-year that the Home prepares.

Roosevelt Hall Reconstruction

Construction will begin in the spring on this project to restore an outdated, three-nursing-ward building into a modern Alzheimer's/dementia building. The Home's experienced staff worked closely with Headquarters to design a space that would enhance the lives of the veterans who will need special accommodations and services.

Emergency Room Entrance Canopy

The basic construction work is nearly complete on a large canopy that will allow ambulances to safely bring patients into the acute care area without regard to weather.

Landscaping Holderman Hospital's West Entrance

This previously unimproved area is in the process of becoming an attractive, recreational and rest area for hospitalized and independent residents to enjoy.

Other projects that are in the pipeline include a major upgrade to the Home's electrical power distribution and improvements in water storage capacity. Under the direction of Deputy Administrator Cheri Kluever, Andy Ellicock, Chief of Plant Operations, oversees the projects that make the Home a place with a unique history and the modern amenities for living.

VETERANS LEGISLATION MAKES GAINS IN SPITE OF BUDGET CRISIS

The state legislative session for 2003 ended on September 12th with a number of veteran-related bills passing both houses. That left the next crucial deadline of October 12th as the last day for the Governor to sign or veto bills passed by the legislature. Although this year's state budget woes stymied much legislation that required any degree of funding, the veterans community still managed to make gains as Governor Davis signed bills that addressed tax-exemptions, protection of personal military records, veteran outreach assistance, the Cal-Vet Home Loan program, the Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise (DVBE), a cemetery commission, and preserving military artifacts for the State Military Museum. Some of those bills and their authors follow. The laws will take effect January 1, 2004.

Tax related:

AB 189 - Codgill - Exempts meals and food products that are furnished or served by any nonprofit veterans' organization for purposes of fundraising from sales and use tax.

AB 322 – Parra - Extends a disabled veteran's property tax exemption to property owned, in whole or in part, by the veteran's spouse. It also extends the property tax exemption to the veteran's spouse while the disabled veterans is confined to a hospital or other care facility, provided that property is still owned and claimed as the principle residence of the veteran.

Personal Military Records:

SB 544 – Chesbro- Requires if a military veteran wishes to record any military discharge document including a veteran's service form DD214 at the county recorder's office, that office shall require the veteran to sign a form acknowledging that the document becomes a part of the official record of the county, and subject to inspection.

Veteran Outreach Assistance:

AB 1594 – Parra - Provides that veteran outreach assistance programs that make available emergency shelter or transitional housing to veterans be permitted to apply for state funding through the Emergency Housing and Assistance Program.

Cal-Vet Home Loan program:

AB 1036 – Mullin - Authorize the Cal-Vet Home Loan program to waive the down payment on loans guaranteed by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Veterans eligible for the VA guarantee will be able to obtain 100% loans from Cal-Vet. Low to moderate-income veterans can receive down payment assistance through a deferred-payment second loan program. The bill also increases the maximum Cal-Vet loan for the purchase of a mobile home located within a mobile home park from \$70,000 to \$125,000 and increases the maximum allowable Cal-Vet loan for a farm to 150% of the maximum Cal-Vet home loan.

Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise (DVBE):

AB 669 – Cohn - Requires small businesses and disabled veteran business enterprises to perform commercially useful functions in relation to any state contract those businesses are awarded for construction, the procurement of goods, information technology, or the delivery of services, materials, supplies, equipment, alteration, repair, or improvement. Revises the definition of disabled veteran and provides for civil penalties for misrepresentation.

SB 1008 – Machado - Specifies that a limited liability company may be certified as a disabled veteran business enterprise if the entity is wholly owned by one or more disabled veterans. Deems a disabled business enterprise that rents equipment to an awarding department to be an equipment broker. Requires a disabled veteran business enterprise and its owners to

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VETERANS LEGISLATION MAKES GAINS IN SPITE OF BUDGET CRISIS

submit copies of the enterprise's federal income tax returns. Provides for verification of certification.

Veterans Cemetery Commission:

SB 748 – McPherson - Creates the Governor's Commission on State Veterans' Cemeteries within the CDVA. Requires the commission to establish the need for State veterans' cemeteries and locate and prioritize sites for future construction of those cemeteries. Prohibits the department from implementing recommendations made by the commission without statutory authorization and specified federal funding.

State Military Museum:

AB 542 – Dutra - Provides that items of state military historical value being held for public sale by the State Controllers Office to be held by the State Military Museum and Resource Center in trust for the Controller. The bill also authorizes the State Military Museum to enter into agreements with other military museums to loan property that is under its direct control or has been reverted to the state.

The California Department of Veterans Affairs wishes to thank the veterans, veterans organizations, and legislators who were instrumental in crafting and lobbying these and any other bills that continue to improve conditions for our veterans.



PROCLAMATION

by the

Governor of the State of California

WHEREAS, the invaluable contributions of our service men and women have helped to shape the course of world history and protect our most cherished liberties; and,

WHEREAS, a concurrent congressional resolution was passed in 1926 to commemorate the anniversary of the end of World War I and pay homage to its veterans; and,

WHEREAS, celebrated on November 11, Armistice Day became an official holiday in 1938 and became Veterans Day in 1954 to expand recognition to all of America's veterans; and,

WHEREAS, Veterans Day provides the opportunity to pay tribute to the courage, strength and sacrifice of those who have faithfully served our nation in uniform; and,

WHEREAS, celebrated in conjunction with Veterans Day, California Veterans Awareness Week was established to educate students and the public about the contributions of our nation's veterans; and,

WHEREAS, it is important to continue to honor our veterans, recognize those who currently serve and remember those who paid the ultimate price for the blessings of peace and freedom.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GRAY DAVIS, Governor of the State of California, do hereby proclaim November 9-16, 2003 as California Veterans Awareness Week and November 11, 2003 as "Veterans Day."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this the third day of November 2003.



/s/ Gray Davis
Governor of California

NATIONAL VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Veterans throughout California wishing to record your wartime memories for future generations to hear and appreciate have that opportunity through the gracious cooperation of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) along with the National Veterans History Project. The AARP, a major sponsor of this activity, is working with the Library of Congress and its American Folklife Center to invite veterans who have served during times of war to participate in the Veterans History Project. The mission of this project is to create a lasting legacy of recorded interviews and documents chronicling veterans' and other citizens' wartime experiences. All interviews and documents will be archived in the Library of Congress.

Secretary Johannessen recently participated in the Veterans History Project at the invitation of the AARP. The hour-long videotaping of his personal and military life, and service to California's veterans, was conducted at the California Channel studio in Sacramento. The California Channel is one of sixty-one partners statewide providing this service to our veterans.

The Veterans Home at Yountville, which has a very active Veterans Media Program, is also one of those partners in the Veterans History Project. The staff, consisting of Home employees and resident volunteers, has been recording stories of its resident veterans for over twenty years and currently has close to 200 recordings in their archives.

The AARP is encouraging veterans to contact its office, which in turn will arrange for a taping session at a location convenient to you. To schedule your interview please contact AARP at the following:

Northern California
Dr. Raymond Williams
916-612-2237
RAYCAE@aol.com

Southern California
Dallas N. Perkins or Dolores M. Perkins
626-358-3068
[TASH#\\$\\$@aol.com](mailto:TASH#$$@aol.com)

California Veterans Homes Statistics

Total census as of 10/31/03

Barstow – Total 143

Domiciliary – 103
Intermediate Care – 40
Skilled Nursing – 0

Chula Vista – Total 324

Domiciliary – 151
Assisted Living (RCFE) – 49
Skilled Nursing – 124

Yountville – Total 1069 (3 acute)

Domiciliary – 625
Assisted Living (RCFE) – 81
Intermediate Care – 141
Skilled Nursing Care – 219

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From The Desk Of The Secretary:

veterans home their domicile over the next 5 to 8 years.

Thousands of veterans have taken advantage of the Cal-Vet Farm and Home loan program and many sons and daughters of disabled veterans are attending a California State or University of California campus without having to pay for tuition.

These are but some of the benefits our California veterans can currently access. But our veterans need more than these benefits; they need all of us to remember that freedom comes at a price and that they were willing to make that sacrifice.

This Veterans Day, before you go to the shopping mall or to the movies, thank a veteran by attending a patriotic event in your community. Visit veterans that are shut-ins because of illness or simply attend one of the many memorial services being held throughout the state. We owe our freedom to veterans. Let us thank them, not only on their special day, but everyday, for they have earned our respect and gratitude.